

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RABAT 03321 100509Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 TRSE-00 /091 W

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R 091600Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5923

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 3321

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP AG

SUBJECT: KING'S BIRTHDAY SPEECH DEVOTED TO SAHARA AND ELECTIONS

1. IN ANNUAL BIRTHDAY SPEECH, DELIVERED A DAY EARLY THIS YEAR
ON JULY 8, KING HASSAN CONCENTRATED ON SAHARA AND FUTURE ELECTIONS:

A. SAHARA. SPEAKING MAINLY IN GENERALITIES, KING SAID THAT
ALL PHASES OF MOROCCO'S SAHARA CAMPAIGN--DIPLOMATIC, LEGAL,
AND MILITARY--HAD BEEN ENGAGED WITH COLLECTIVE NATIONAL
WISDOM. SUCCESS THEREBY ASSURED, DESPITE DOUBTS OF DETRACTORS.
CREATION OF A MOROCCAN-MAURITANIAN BORDER WOULD ALLOW FULFILL-
MENT AGAIN OF MOROCCO'S AFRICAN VOCATION. ALGERIA, KING STATED,
IS NOW OBLIGATED TO BE AT THE SIDE OF MOROCCO THANKS TO
MOROCCO'S FAITH IN ITS CAUSE AND DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED.
ON FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SAHARA, KING STRESSED
NECESSITY OF EXPLOITATION OF LOCAL RESOURCES FOR BENEFIT OF
REGION ITSELF. THIS WOULD PROVE MOROCCO NOT PEKING SAHARA
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PAGE 02 RABAT 03321 100509Z

FOR ITS RICHES BUT BECAUSE IT INTEGRAL PART OF MOROCCO.

TERRITORY, HE ADDED, WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY SAHRAOUI, WHO KNOW REALITIES OF REGION BEST.

B. INTERNAL SITUATION. KING SAID GENERAL ELECTIONS "WILL BE HELD IN A YEAR OR A YEAR AND A HALF AT THE LATEST." PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES (I.E. SAHARA), KING EXPLAINED, IMPOSE THE DELAY. KING ALSO BROUGHT UP SUBJECT OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS, "WHICH MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, AS THEY WILL PROVIDE ONE THIRD OF MEMBERSHIP OF PARLIAMENT." A NATIONAL COMMISSION REPRESENTING ALL SHADES OF OPINION IS TO BE CREATED "BEFORE END OF SUMMER" TO STUDY QUESTION OF FUTURE POWERS OF THE COUNCILS. SCOPE OF THEIR ACTIVITY WILL BE BROADENED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, KING INDICATED, SO THAT COUNCILS WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY ROLE OF "LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES."

2. COMMENT: CONTRARY TO EXPECTATIONS OF MANY, KING DID NOT ADDRESS BASIS OF ENTENTE WITH ALGERIA IN ANY DETAIL. (AUTHORITATIVE SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS EDITORIAL JULY 8, SEEMINGLY IN PREPARATION FOR SPEECH, HAD HINTED BROADLY AT TERMS OF THE ENTENTE, SAYING THAT BORDER PROBLEMS COULD ONLY BE RESOLVED BY RETURN TO "SPIRIT AND LETTER OF EXISTING AGREEMENTS," AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO 1972 BORDER AGREEMENT. EDITORIAL ALSO CITED GARA-DJEBILET PROJECT IN BROAD CONTEXT OF MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN COOPERATION.)

3. KING'S ADDRESS WAS UPBEAT AND NO DOUBT DESIGNED TO CONVEY IMPRESSION HE IN FULL CONTROL OF SAHARA AND INTERNAL SITUATIONS. ON SAHARA, TONE AND CONTENT WERE STUDIOUSLY GENERAL AND MODERATE, WITH EMPHASIS ON POLITICAL MEANS AND INEVITABILITY OF SUCCESS.

4. ON INTERNAL POLITICS, PARTIES HAVE OF COURSE HEARD PROMISES OF ELECTIONS MANY TIMES BEFORE. FOR PRESENT, THEY CAN NO DOUBT BE EXPECTED TO MAINTAIN SAHARA-BASED SOLIDARITY WITH PALACE IN HOPES OF HOLDING KING TO HIS WORD. WHILE KING'S INTENTIONS REMAIN AS MURKY AS EVER, "NATIONAL COMMISSION" ON ROLE OF MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNAL COUNCILS MIGHT SERVE AS SUBSTITUTE FOR LONG-DISCUSSED INCLUSION OF POLITICAL LEADERS AS MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNIT, WITH OR WITHOUT PORTFOLIOS. CASTING OF COUNCILS IN A NEW EXPANDED ROLE OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES ALSO RAISES QUESTION OF HOW THIS WOULD AFFECT SHAPE AND AUTHORITY OF ANY EVENTUAL NEW PARLIAMENT.
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PAGE 03 RABAT 03321 100509Z

BEEFING UP OF COUNCILS SEEMS TO FIT IN WITH APPARENT DESIRE ON PART OF KING TO UPGRADE YOUNGER TECHNICIANS AT EXPENSE OF MORE RECALCITRANT POLITICIANS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTIONS, TERRITORIAL CLAIMS, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975RABAT03321
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750238-0050
From: RABAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750772/aaaacmrr.tel
Line Count: 111
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <02 OCT 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KING'S BIRTHDAY SPEECH DEVOTED TO SAHARA AND ELECTIONS
TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MO, SS, SP, AG, (HASSAN II)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006